

Oil Export Tax

capitalist oriented and not interested in the development of their own country. This is a charge without foundation in fact. It is indeed detrimental to the best interests of our country at a very serious time.

The legislation which has been introduced in respect of the energy requirements of Canada is typical. We have brought in a patchwork regulatory type of legislation which has provided no incentive for anyone to go out to work. It has provided no means whereby the resources of knowledge, technical skill and private and public capability could be encouraged to go forward and seek the solution which must be found if Canada is to remain economically viable.

The only suggestions that have been made by this government in the last year in respect of the economic ills which we have suffered is that the taxpayer will have to help bear the burden, and the government will be given a further opportunity to interfere with the rights and privileges of citizens and other governments in such a fashion that their authority and privileges are restricted. They have exhibited no understanding of the value of national or international goodwill, but rather have been obsessed with the idea of the divine right to rule which is so typical of the present Prime Minister and the cabinet which has continued to advise and support him on this course. There has been a continuing concentration of power in the hands of the central government to the detriment of the provinces, and I abhor this. There has been a total lack of understanding of Canada as it should be.

This is reason enough in itself for the public to reject this government. This government has assumed the position that it is responsible to nobody, and as it has taken on new authority through its authoritative legislation, it has mocked the people of Canada, the democratic structure, and the members of this House in a merciless fashion.

The provinces have little left to deal with when they meet the federal government at the first ministers conference. Yet, the government of Canada has in its hands all the strength it needs to say to the provinces: If you do not like this, this is what we will do anyway. It is not an opportunity for real and proper negotiations. The government of Canada thinks it is now able to confront the provinces and it does not have to have, in the words of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), real and proper negotiations any longer.

I think that one of the typical examples of the unpardonable, incredible and long-term bungling that this government has practised in its last year is the haggling over the method of the development of the tar sands. If Canada were ever in a position where initiative and action were required, it is certainly in the development of the tar sands for the provision of additional fuel for this country. If by any chance all the accusations which the government has made in respect of profits were true, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, and to this nation, that the government has the instrument in its own hands whereby it can correct any improper profit, and that instrument is taxation.

It is high time that the government took a look at the capabilities of this country in all respects. It should not get itself and the citizens of this country into an improper, uncomfortable and unnecessary position by bringing in

[Mr. McCain.]

short-term, prejudicial legislation based upon the absolute need of power and the support of the socialists in this House. The governing party today is not interested in Canada. Rather, it is interested in power alone and it has demonstrated this to the public on innumerable occasions, thus creating the basis for its own defeat.

Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo-Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that the particular bill before us be passed in its entirety before the federal-provincial conference. The provinces have been setting out their positions, particularly the oil producing provinces, and they have a very strong position. We have been reminded on many occasions that in fact the resources are the property of the province, although the movement of those resources is another matter. But the fact that the ownership of those resources under the British North America Act is a provincial right means that the provinces enter the negotiations from a very strong position.

I realize that this debate is creating difficulties for all the members of parliament because all of us here, while the federal interest is uppermost in our minds, cannot help but be somewhat influenced by the provinces from which we come. When there is a federal-provincial confrontation, obviously members, with the best of intentions of fulfilling their duties, find themselves in an awkward position. I have not been adverse to criticizing the members from Alberta in the Conservative party for their position regarding the oil resources.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): Try Saskatchewan.

Mr. Saltsman: I want to say that I will not be any less critical of my own colleagues from the province of Saskatchewan if they take a similar position.

Mr. Baldwin: How about British Columbia?

Mr. Stackhouse: Give us a sample.

Mr. Saltsman: I want to say this, Mr. Speaker. If at any time Quebec had ever behaved in the way that some of our western provinces are behaving, there would have been such an uproar in this House and across the nation as would have been difficult to put down. In the worst of times, Quebec has always been the bad boy in confederation, and it has been at Quebec that the finger has always been pointed. But in my recollection, Quebec has never taken the kind of adamant position against the federal government that is now being taken by the western provinces. Their claims for special recognition and certain rights have always been tempered to some extent, and I must say they have always been far more tempered than the voices of the western provinces. For years it has been the west that has had grievances against Quebec. What does Quebec want? Why is Quebec always making difficulties? Now, we have to ask members from the west the same kind of question.

It may be that some of my friends and colleagues in the House will say that I am not really advocating a federalist position, that after all I am from Ontario and that the remarks I have made about those from Alberta and Saskatchewan probably apply equally well to myself or that I am setting out what might be an Ontario position. It may